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Robert M. Arlein

Arlein 2-2-26-4-5

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EXAMINER

WONG, LESLIE

ART UNIT

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/031,773	Applicant(s) ARLEIN ET AL.	
	Examiner Leslie Wong	Art Unit 2164	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 September 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 and 37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 and 37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 January 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Response to Amendment

1. Receipt of Applicant's Amendment, filed 01 September 2005, is acknowledged.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1-16, 20-30, and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by **Gershman et al.** ("Gershman ") (U.S. Patent 6,199,099 B1).

Regarding claim 1, **Gershman** teaches a method for use in a distributed data network wherein a user may request and receive content from one or more entities in the distributed data network, the method comprising the steps of:

a). **providing one or more mechanisms for enabling at least one of the user and one or more of the entities to control which entities in the distributed data network have access to information generate information in association with the user's activity on the distributed data network** as the profile gateway server is responsible for ensuring that information only given out when the profile owner specially grants permission (col. 43, line 64 – col. 44, line 37; col. 39, lines 5-24; and Fig. 21),

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wherein the user specifies at least one role and, based on the created role, at least one profile for the user is maintained by one or more of the entities (e.g., hotel personnel, intelligent coordinator, and profile gateway server) in the form of information inserted into the profile by one or more of the entities, the information representing the user's activity on the distributed data network with respect to the one or more entities that inserted the information, such that profile maintenance is substantially transparent to the user as one possible use of the ubiquitous profile is for a hotel chain. The consumer brings a Smart Card into a hotel chain and checks in. The hotel is then given access to a certain part of the consumer's profile that he has previously specified. The hotel can then retrieve all of the consumer's billing information as well as preferences for hotel room, etc. The hotel can also access the consumer's movie and dining preferences and offer customized menus for both of them. ALL TRANSACTION INFORMATION CAN BE UPLOADED TO THE CONSUMER'S PROFILE AFTER THE HOTEL CHECKS HIM IN. *This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered* (col. 44, lines 26-36); and

b). **customizing content to be received by the user in accordance with at least a portion of the information in the user profile** as attached to each Profile are sets of Profile restriction record. The user maintains a Work Travel Profile that contains all of the business rules related to booking tickets and making reservations. This profile may specify that this person only travels in Business or First Class and his preferred airline is United Airline. Based on the user's profile, the integrator manages the

relationship between suppliers and consumers and providing the consumer with information about products and suppliers and offering objective advice (col. 41, line 57 - col. 42, line 3; col. 41, lines 40-45; col. 44, lines 41-48; and Fig. 12).

Regarding claims 2, 3, and 20 **Gershman** further teaches wherein the step of providing the one or more control mechanisms for the user comprises the step of enabling the user to specify two or more roles within which the user may perform activities on the distributed data network (col. 32, lines 32-42 and Figs. 12-14).

Regarding claims 4 and 5, **Gershman** further teaches wherein the substantial unlinkability of the profiles substantially prevents an entity from learning about the user's activity at another entity, when the user conducts activities at the different entities in the different roles (col. 41, lines 5-50).

Regarding claims 6, 7, and 12, **Gershman** further teaches wherein the roles are specified in accordance with at least one dedicated server located in the distributed data network (col. 35 lines 51-56; col. 30, lines 30-35 and 59-64; Figs. 10A and 17).

Regarding claims 8, 9, 22, and 30 **Gershman** further teaches providing the one or more control mechanisms for the one or more entities comprises the step of enabling the one or more entities to specify which other entities are able to access information entities learned in association with the user conducting activities with the one or more

entities as the User's profiles contains user-specified data and information that the Intelligent Agent Coordinator has learned and extrapolated from each user's information and activities (col. 39, lines 5-24; col. 43, line 64 – col. 44, line 37; col. 39, lines 5-24)

Regarding claims 10, 11, 14-16, and 23-26, **Gershman** further teaches wherein the one or more entities are enabled to specify a degree of information derivation in accordance with which other entities may be able to access the information (col. 41, line 57 - col. 42, line 3).

Regarding claim 13, **Gershman** teaches a method for use in accordance with at least one server in a distributed data network wherein a user may request and receive content from one or more entities in the distributed data network, the method comprising the steps of:

a). **maintaining two or more user-specified policies respectively associated with two or more roles within which the user may perform activities on the distributed data network** as a user may have multiple personas. A user may create one persona when making purchases for his home. The same user may create a second persona that can be when he is in a work context (col. 41, lines 6-22 and col. 41, line 58 – col. 42, line 3); and

b). **issuing access credentials associated with the user-specified policies to one or more entities that seek to access information generated in association with the user's activity on the distributed data network so as to**

customized content to be received by the user in accordance with at least a portion of the accessible information as each profile field also contains a set of permissions that are contain in that record. These permissions dictate who has what access rights to that particular profile field's information. One possible use of the ubiquitous profile is for a hotel chain. The consumer brings a Smart Card into a hotel chain and checks in. The hotel is then given access to a certain part of the consumer's profile that he has previously specified. The hotel can then retrieve all of the consumer's billing information as well as preferences for hotel room, etc. The hotel can also access the consumer's movie and dining preferences and offer customized menus for both of them. All transaction information can be uploaded to the consumer's profile after the hotel checks him in. This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered (col. 41, lines 65 – col. 42, line 3; col. 44, lines 25-37).

Regarding claim 21, **Gershman** teaches a method for use in accordance with one or more databases in a distributed data network wherein a user may request and receive content from one or more entities in the distributed data network, the method comprising the steps of (col. 43, lines 45-55):

a). **storing information that the one or more entities learn in association with the user conducting activities with the one or more entities** as all transaction information can be uploaded to the consumer's profile after the hotel checks him in.

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This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered (col. 44, lines 33-37; col. 48, lines 14-24); and

b). **enabling the one or more entities to specify which other entities are able to access the stored information so as to customize content to be received by the user in accordance with at least a portion of the accessible information as each profile field also contains a set of permissions that are contain in that record.**

These permissions dictate who has what access rights to that particular profile field's information. All transaction information can be uploaded to the consumer's profile after the hotel checks him in. This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered (col. 41, line 67 – col. 42, line 3; col. 44, lines 34-37).

Regarding claims 27 and 28, **Gershman** further teaches applying a scoring function to portions of the stored information to which a given entity has access (col. 14, lines 49-52; col. 30, lines 16-27).

Regarding claim 29, **Gershman** teaches an apparatus for use in a distributed data network wherein a user may request and receive content from one or more entities in the distributed data network, the apparatus comprising:

at least one processor operative to (Fig. 1, element 110):

(i) **maintain two or more user-specified policies respectively associated with two or more roles within which the user may perform activities on the**

distributed data network as a user may have multiple personas. A user may create one persona when making purchases for his home. The same user may create a second persona that can be when he is in a work context (col. 41, lines 6-22 and col. 41, line 58 – col. 42, line 3); and

(ii) **issue access credentials associated with the user-specified policies to one or more entities that seek to access information generated in association with the user's activity on the distributed data network so as to customize content to be received by the user in accordance with at least a portion of the accessible information** as each profile field also contains a set of permissions that are contain in that record. These permissions dictate who has what access rights to that particular profile field's information. One possible use of the ubiquitous profile is for a hotel chain. The consumer brings a Smart Card into a hotel chain and checks in. The hotel is then given access to a certain part of the consumer's profile that he has previously specified. The hotel can then retrieve all of the consumer's billing information as well as preferences for hotel room, etc. The hotel can also access the consumer's movie and dining preferences and offer customized menus for both of them. all transaction information can be uploaded to the consumer's profile after the hotel checks him in. This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered (col. 41, lines 65 – col. 42, line 3; col. 44, lines 25-37).

Regarding claim 37, **Gershman** teaches apparatus for use in a distributed data network wherein a user may request and receive content from one or more entities in the distributed data network, the apparatus comprising:

at least one processor operative to (Fig. 1, element 110);

(i) **store information that the one or more entities learn in association with the user conducting activities with the one or more entities** all transaction information can be uploaded to the consumer's profile after the hotel checks him in. This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered (col. 44, lines 33-37; col. 48, lines 14-24); and

(ii) **enable the one or more entities to specify which other entities are able to access the stored information so as to customize content to be received by the user in accordance with at least a portion of the accessible information** as each profile field also contains a set of permissions that are contain in that record. These permissions dictate who has what access rights to that particular profile field's information. All transaction information can be uploaded to the consumer's profile after the hotel checks him in. This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered (col. 41, line 67 – col. 42, line 3; col. 44, lines 34-37).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Gershman et al.** ("Gershman ") (U.S. Patent 6,199,099 B1) as applied to claims 1-16, 20-30, and 37 and in view of **Lau et al.** ("Lau") (U.S. Patent 6,182,124 B1).

Regarding claim 17, **Gershman** does not explicitly teach wherein the access credentials further comprise an expiration time specifying a duration of the access rights.

Lau, however, teaches 'the access credentials further comprise an expiration time specifying a duration of the access rights' as a method for enforcing time limits in an electronic filing system (col. 3, lines 20-23, lines 40-49).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of the cited references because **Lau's** teaching would have allowed **Gershman's** to enforce time limits on electronic submission by revoking access privileges of the user at the time a deadline expires as suggested by **Lau** at col. 6, lines 5-12.

Regarding claim 18, **Gershman** does not explicitly teach wherein the access credentials further comprise a digital signature on the access credentials.

Lau, however, teaches 'the access credentials further comprise a digital signature on the access credentials' as the application may use message digest, encryption, and digital signature technologies to assure integrity, privacy, authentication, and non-repudiation of submissions (col. 5, lines 18-21).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of the cited references because **Lau's** teaching would have allowed **Gershman's** to assure integrity, privacy, authentication, and non-repudiation of submissions as suggested by **Lau** at col. 5, lines 18-21.

6. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Gershman et al.** ("Gershman ") (U.S. Patent 6,199,099 B1) in view of **Lau et al.** ("Lau") (U.S. Patent 6,182,124 B1) as applied to claims 17 and 18 above and further in view of **Herz** (US 2001/0014868 A1).

Regarding claim 19, **Gershman** and **Lau** do not explicitly teach the access credentials further comprise a public key matching a private key by which the access credentials have been digitally signed.

Herz, however, teaches 'access credentials further comprise a public key matching a private key by which the access credentials have been digitally signed' as the customer uses his private key to encrypt a random string R chosen by the vendor, and the vendor verifies that R may be retrieved by decrypting this with the public key of the customer identified in the coupon (§ 0288).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of the cited references because **Lau's** teaching would have allowed **Gershman-Lau's** to maximized security measure in verification of customers identify by requiring the customer to present the private key to match with its public key as suggested by **Herz** at § 0288.

Response to Argument

7. Applicants' arguments filed 09/01/2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that Gershman does not disclose profile maintenance which is maintained by the entity and thus transparent to the user. Applicants further indicate in the present invention that entities are merchants and the maintenance of the profile is maintained by the merchants inserting records about user activity, (e.g., user bought a book on Egypt may be entered by the bookstore) in a profile database.

In response to the preceding arguments, Examiner respectfully submits that Gershman teaches the limitation: *"...the profile for the user is maintained by one or more of the entities in the form of the information inserted into the profile by one or more of the entities, ... such that profile maintenance is substantially transparent to the user"* as one possible use of the ubiquitous profile is for a hotel chain. The consumer brings a Smart Card into a hotel chain and checks in. The hotel is then given access to a certain part of the consumer's profile that he has previously specified. The hotel can then retrieve all of the consumer's billing information as well as preferences for hotel room, etc. The hotel can also access the consumer's movie and dining preferences and offer customized menus for both of them. ALL TRANSACTION INFORMATION CAN BE UPLOADED TO THE CONSUMER'S PROFILE AFTER THE HOTEL CHECKS HIM IN. **This will allow partners of the hotel to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered** (col. 44, lines 15-36). Gershman further teaches the user profiles contain extensive information about the users. This information is a blend of user-specified data and information that the Intelligent Agent Coordinator has learned and extrapolated from each user's information and activities. The Intelligent Agent Coordinator is constantly modifying and updating these profiles by watching the user's activities (col. 48, lines 14-24).

In response to applicants' argument that the references fail to disclose profile maintenance which is maintained by the entity and thus transparent to the user and that entities are merchants in the Applicants' invention, it is noted that the features upon

which applicant relies (i.e., **entities are merchants**) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

The term “**entities**” is defined, by The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition Copyright © 2004, 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Company, as follows:

en·ti·ty

1. *Something that exists as a particular and discrete unit: Persons and corporations are equivalent entities under the law.*
2. *The fact of existence; being.*
3. *The existence of something considered apart from its properties.*

As a result, Applicants’ broadly claimed “entities” read on Gershman’s teaching of users, hotel personnel, intelligent agents, statistical agent, and profile gateway server because they fit in the above given dictionary meaning: “*Something that exists as a particular and discrete unit*”. Hence, Gershman teaches the limitations as claimed.

Applicants argue that not only does Gershman fail to disclose a server issue access credentials associated with the user-specified policies to ..., but the Office Action fails to even mention such limitations of claims 13 and 29 in citing Gershman in its rejection. It seems the Office Action only addresses the limitations of independent claim 1, while ignoring the limitations of independent claims 13 and 29.

In response to the preceding arguments, Examiner respectfully submits that claims 13 and 29 recite as follows:

13. (Original) A method for use in accordance with at least one server in a distributed data network wherein a user may request and receive content from one or more entities in the distributed data network, the method comprising the steps of:

maintaining two or more user-specified policies respectively associated with two or more roles within which the user may perform activities on the distributed data network; and

issuing access credentials associated with the user-specified policies to one or more entities that seek to access information generated in association with the user's activity on the distributed data network so as to customize content to be received by the user in accordance with at least a portion of the accessible information.

29. (Original) Apparatus for use in a distributed data network wherein a user may request and receive content from one or more entities in the distributed data network, the apparatus comprising:

at least one processor operative to: (i) maintain two or more user-specified policies respectively associated with two or more roles within which the user may perform activities on the distributed data network; and (ii) issue access credentials associated with the user-specified policies to one or more entities that seek to access information generated in association with the user's activity on the distributed data network so as to customize content to be received by the user in accordance with at least a portion of the accessible information.

Base on the above, Examiner submits that it is not seen that the limitations of claims 13 and 29 requires that "a server issuing access credentials associated with the user-specified policies..." as argued by the Applicants on page 8, last paragraph of the response. As such the argument is irrelevant. In Office Action dated April 26, 2005, the Examiner rejected claims 13 and 29 on the same ground as claims 1, 21, and 37 as

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specified on page 2 of that Office Action. As such the Examiner did not ignore the limitations of claims 13 and 29. In this Office Action, Examiner addresses all the independent claims separately in an effort to help the Applicants to better understand the rejection.

Further, Applicants argue that Gershman's "access control" is not the same as a server performing the step of issuing access credentials associated with the user-specified policies to one or more entities that seek to access information ... as in claims 13 and 29, nor is it the same as a database enabling the one or more entities to specify which other entities are able to access the stored information ... as in claims 21 and 37. Applicants further argue that Gershman expressly states that "these permissions dictate who has what access rights to that particular Profile Fields information and cited col. 33, lines 4-5.

In response to the preceding arguments, Examiner respectfully submits that the step of "server performing the step of issuing access credential" is not seen in the claimed limitation as explained from the above paragraph. As for the limitation "...a database enabling the one or more entities to specify which other entities are able to access the stored information...", Gershman teaches it as the profile database 1710 is the central storage place for the user's profile information. The profile gateway server receives all requests for profile information, whether from the user himself or merchants trying to provide a serves to the user. The profile gateway server is responsible for

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ensuring that information is only given out when the profile owner specifically grants permission (col. 43, line 63 – col. 44, line 2).

Further, Applicants continued to argue on the limitation “substantial unlinkability” from the previous Office Action. Applicants contend that the Examiner asserts that because Gershman mentions the use of different profiles for a user, this automatically means that the profiles are “substantial unlinkability”. This conclusion is without reasonable basis. No where does Gershman mention “substantial unlinkability”. The use of different profiles in Gershman may serve a convenience purpose for a user, however, this does not translate to “substantial unlinkability”.

In response to the preceding arguments, Examiner respectfully submits that Claim 4, recites the “substantial unlinkability of the profiles substantially prevents an entity from learning about the user's activity at another entity, when the user conducts activities at the different entities in the different roles”

Gershman teaches that the hotel can upload consumer's transaction information to the consumer's profile after the hotel checks him in. This will allow partners of the hotels to utilize the information about the consumer that the hotel has gathered (again, **given the consumer's permission**) (col. 44, lines 25-36). For example, the user's Work Travel Profile contains all of the business rules related to booking tickets and making reservations. The profile may specify that this person only travels in Business or First Class and his preferred airline is United Airlines. The profile restriction would also be rules that dictate that the user cannot book a flight from on a certain airline

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contained in the list. It then follows that the user's profile would not have permissions for the airlines on the restricted list (col. 41, lines 40-50 and col. 41, lines 65 – col. 42, lines 3)

Based on the above, it is submitted that Gershman's teaching of different personas and Profile Restrictions are in conformity with the Applicants' claimed limitation "substantial unlinkable" as recited in claim 4.

Applicants argue that Gershman/Lau combination fails to establish a prima facie case of obviousness under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as specified in M.P.E.P § 2143.

In response to applicants' argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, **Gershman** teaches an agent based systems and more particularly to a mobile computing environment that accesses the Internet to obtain product information for a user and provides tools for collaborative computing (col. 1, lines 35-39). **Gershman** further teaches access credential as each Profile contains a set of permissions dictate who has what access rights to that particular Profile Field's information (col. 41, line 57 – col. 42, line 3). Additionally, **Gershman** teaches the integrator manages the relationship

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between suppliers and consumers and providing the consumer with information about products and suppliers and offering objective advice (col. 44, lines 44-48). **Lau**, on the other hand, teaches mechanisms that enforcing time limits (i.e., expiration time) for filing electronic submissions in a network environment (col. 3, lines 35-37) and digital signature to assure integrity, privacy, and authentication etc... of submissions (col. 5, lines 18-20).

Applicants' claim 17 requires: "the access credentials further comprise an expiration time specifying a duration of the access rights". **Gershman** teaches the access credential feature. **Lau** teaches expiration time.

Similarly, Applicants' claim 18 requires: "the access credentials further comprise a digital signature on the access credential". **Gershman** teaches the access credential feature. **Lau** teaches digital signature.

Gershman and **Lau** related in that they both deal with Internet submission, security, and privacy. Therefore, one of the ordinary skilled in the art would have been motivated to combine **Gershman** with **Lau** because combining the references would have arrived at Applicants' claimed limitation.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Leslie Wong whose telephone number is (571) 272-4120. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 9:30am - 6:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, CHARLES RONES can be reached on (571) 272-4085. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Leslie Wong
Primary Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2164

LW
November 26, 2005